

Message Text

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TAGS: FR, PARM, NATO, XA

SUBJECT: MITTERRAND'S FOREIGN POLICY ADVISOR SURVEYS
THE ELECTIONS AND THE WORLD

REF: PARIS 7283

1. POLITICAL COUNSELOR LUNCHEDED WITH MITTERRAND'S
CHIEF FOREIGN POLICY ADVISOR ROBERT PONTILLON MARCH 8
AND SOUGHT TO GET A SENSE OF HOW PONTILLON SAW THE
FOREIGN POLICY OF A POSSIBLE GOVERNMENT OF THE LEFT
IN THE LIGHT OF RECENT HIGH-LEVEL SOCIALIST PARTY
STATEMENTS (PARIS 7283). WHAT WAS MOST STRIKING,
IN VIEW OF PONTILLON'S PRO-US ORIENTATION, WAS HIS
ADMISSION THAT A PS-LED FRENCH GOVERNMENT WOULD
HAVE DIFFERENCES WITH THE US OVER FOREIGN POLICY,
PARTICULARLY IN THE ECONOMIC AREA. BUT HE EMPHASIZED
IN THE FINAL ANALYSIS A SOCIALIST-LED GOVERNMENT
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WOULD SHARE THE SAME BASIC ORIENTATION AS THE US.
PERHAPS SIGNIFICANTLY, HE USED A GAULLIST ANALOGY,
SAYING THAT THE US HAD HAD PROBLEMS IN THE PAST WITH
DE GAULLE (AND JOBERT), BUT THERE WAS NEVER ANY
DOUBT WHICH SIDE DE GAULLE WAS ON.

2. WE NOTED TO PONTILLON A MAJOR US APPREHENSION

THAT A POSSIBLE CONSEQUENCE OF THE PS ECONOMIC PROGRAM WOULD BE A CLOSING OF THE BORDERS TO TRADE AND CAPITAL MOVEMENTS, THUS LEADING TO FRICTION WITH FRANCE'S EUROPEAN PARTNERS AND THE US. PONTILLON ACKNOWLEDGED THAT THIS COULD INDEED BE A MAJOR POINT OF CONTENTION AND SAID THAT THE PS WOULD BE VERY ANXIOUS TO MINIMIZE THE INTERNATIONAL EFFECT OF ITS DOMESTIC ECONOMIC PROGRAM. HE SAID THAT THE STIMULATION ASPECTS WERE LIKELY TO BE IMPLEMENTED VERY FAST SO TO GET THE ECONOMY MOVING. HE MADE THE ANALOGY OF THE NEW DEAL, CASTING BARRE AS HOOVER. INCREASES IN MINIMUM WAGES, FAMILY ALLOTMENTS, AND OLD AGE SUBSIDIES WOULD ALL BE PUT INTO EFFECT IN THE FIRST FEW MONTHS. PONTILLON ALSO THOUGHT THAT COMMUNIST PRESSURE WOULD RESULT IN SOME EARLY NATIONALIZATIONS. HE SAID THAT, WHETHER THERE ARE COMMUNISTS IN THE GOVERNMENT OR JUST IN THE ASSEMBLY MAJORITY, THE PC WOULD PRESS THE SOCIALISTS TO MOVE VERY FAST ON THE ECONOMIC PROGRAM. A GRADUALIST HIMSELF, PONTILLON SAID HE FELT THERE WOULD BE A PS EFFORT TO KEEP THE PACE DOWN TO WHAT THE INTERNATIONAL TRAFFIC WOULD BEAR.

3. IN DISCUSSING THE PCF (ON WHOSE HATE LIST HE COMES NEAR THE TOP) PONTILLON SAID THAT HE CONTINUED TO BELIEVE THAT THE COMMUNISTS DO NOT WANT CONFIDENTIAL

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TO COME INTO THE GOVERNMENT. THEY WOULD PREFER TO SNIPE AT A MONO-COLOR SOCIALIST GOVERNMENT FROM THE ASSEMBLY. GIVEN THEIR MAJOR OBJECTIVE OF REDUCING PS POWER, PONTILLON THOUGHT THE COMMUNISTS IN SUCH A SITUATION WOULD BE ABLE TO FORCE THE SOCIALISTS OUT OF POWER WITHIN 6 MONTHS. FOR THIS REASON HE FELT THAT IT WAS BETTER TO HAVE COMMUNISTS IN THE GOVERNMENT WHERE THEY HAD TO TAKE RESPONSIBILITY. THEIR OBJECTIVE IN GOVERNMENT, IF THEY WENT IN, WOULD BE TO STAFF THE GOVERNMENT BUREAUCRACY AND NATIONALIZED COMPANIES WITH PC AND CGT PEOPLE. HE WAS NOT OPTIMISTIC THAT, ONCE ENTRENCHED, THEY WOULD BE EASY TO DISLODGE; IN FACT, HE SAID THERE WERE STILL COMMUNISTS IN THE BUREAUCRACY FROM THE 1945-47 PERIOD.

4. ASKED ABOUT THE PROBABLE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN A SOCIALIST PRIME MINISTER AND PRESIDENT GISCARD, PONTILLON EXPRESSED CONFIDENCE THAT THE TWO COULD WORK AROUND THE AMBIGUITIES IN THE CONSTITUTION REGARDING WHERE POWER FOR FOREIGN POLICY RESIDES. HE SAID THAT MITTERRAND HAS ENOUGH ON HIS MIND WITHOUT

WANTING A CONSTITUTIONAL CRISIS. HE SAID IT WOULD BE LOGICAL TO ASSUME THAT GISCARD WOULD GO TO SUMMIT MEETINGS BUT WITH A SENIOR MEMBER OF THE GOVERNMENT ALONG; HE FELT THEY WOULD BE ABLE TO SPEAK WITH ONE VOICE. PONTILLON STRONGLY DENIED THAT MITTERRAND HAD ANY DESIRE, FOR PERSONAL AMBITION OR ANY OTHER REASON, TO PROVOKE A PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION BEFORE 1981. HE ADDED, BY THE WAY, THAT HE BELIEVED MITTERRAND WOULD BE THE PRIME MINISTER IN THE EVENT OF A LEFT VICTORY. HE DISCOUNTED RECENT SPECULATION THAT FORMER PRIME MINISTER MENDES-FRANCE MIGHT BE ACCEPTABLE TO MITTERRAND, ADDING THAT MITTERRAND WOULD NEED TO BE THE PRIME MINISTER IN ORDER TO HOLD THE PARTY TOGETHER.

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5. ON SPECIFIC FOREIGN POLICY ISSUES, PONTILLON SAID THAT THE PS HAD NO MAJOR DIFFERENCES WITH GISCARD'S FOREIGN POLICY WITH THE POSSIBLE EXCEPTION OF AFRICA. HE CONFIRMED THAT THE PS WOULD BE LESS INTERVENTIONIST IN AFRICA, BUT EXPRESSED THE PERSONAL OPINION THAT THIS DOES NOT MEAN THE PS WOULD BE INDIFFERENT TO SOVIET INROADS IN AFRICA. INDEED, HE EXPRESSED THE CONVICTION (WHICH WE KNOW IS NOT SHARED BY PS THIRD WORLD EXPERT LIONEL JOSPIN) THAT THE INCREASED SOVIET ACTIVITY IN AFRICA IS A MENACE TO EUROPE. PONTILLON SAID THERE WOULD BE A REVIEW BUT NOT NECESSARILY A RENEGOTIATION OF FRANCE'S BILATERAL TREATIES WITH AFRICAN STATES.

6. ON DEFENSE, PONTILLON EXPRESSED THE OPINION THAT THE PS IS MOVING IN A MORE ATLANTIST DIRECTION. HE CITED THE PARTY'S ABANDONMENT OF THE "ALL-AZIMUTH" NUCLEAR TARGETING POLICY AS AN EXAMPLE. WE ASKED IF, IN VIEW OF THE PS PRIORITY FOR DOMESTIC ECONOMIC CHANGES, THERE WAS MUCH PROSPECT OF CONTINUING THE LEVEL OF BUDGETING FOR THE FRENCH NUCLEAR FORCE. PONTILLON SAID HE WAS CONVINCED THAT THE FRENCH DETERRENT WOULD GET ADEQUATE BUDGET SUPPORT, NOTING THAT IT WAS NOT A MAJOR ELEMENT OF THE MILITARY BUDGET.

7. ON NATO WE RECALLED TO PONTILLON THE RECENT PS STATEMENT THAT IT WOULD PUT AN END TO THE "MEASURES OF REINSERTION" TAKEN BY THE CURRENT GOVERNMENT. HE SAID THAT THE PS WOULD PROBABLY TRY TO PRESERVE SOME ASPECTS OF FRENCH MILITARY

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COOPERATION WITH NATO AND BILATERALLY WITH THE US, BUT WOULD HAVE TO SEE THE DOSSIERS ON EXISTING TYPES OF COOPERATION BEFORE TAKING ANY SPECIFIC POSITION. HE SAID THAT THE NORTH ATLANTIC TREATY NEEDS UPDATING BUT WAS VAGUE ON HOW.

8. PONTILLON AFFIRMED STRONGLY MITTERRAND'S DESIRE FOR CLOSE ASSOCIATION WITH THE US. HE SAID MITTERRAND WAS EVEN MORE ATLANTICIST THAN HE HIMSELF (WHICH WE DOUBT). BUT HE DID NOT DISGUISE HIS CONCERN OVER BILATERAL PROBLEMS BETWEEN THE US AND

A PS-LED GOVERNMENT (SEE PARA. 1). WITH REGARD TO THE SOVIET UNION PONTILLON SAID THAT THERE WAS NO DOUBT THAT SOVIETS FAVORED A VICTORY FOR THE MAJORITY AND FELT THAT THE SOVIET ATTITUDE HAD HAD AN EFFECT ON PC RELUCTANCE TO ENTER THE GOVERNMENT. HARTMAN. UNQUOTE VANCE

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